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ABSTRACT

Two hundred Honolulu-area students from the fourth, fifth, eighth, and ninth grades participated in a study that examined the variables effects of five selected factors (developmental level, sex, reading ability, adult intervention, and variation in film content/form) on the ability of two age groups (nine and ten year old children and thirteen and fourteen year-old early adolescents) to enjoy, comprehend, and interpret narrative films. The four films used in the study represented one type of folk genre, the explanatory tale. The two age groups differed in their responses to the films for all factors except adult intervention, promoting these conclusions: Piaget's theory appears to be a useful guide in predicting response to narrative film, although United States children/adolescents in this study were somewhat older than those of Piaget's sample; sex was a moderating factor in film appeal; reading ability correlated with literal comprehension and interpretation, but not consistently for all four films; and variation in film content was the single most powerful factor affecting response. (Author/RL)

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Responses to Filmed Versions of Folk Tales

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to learn how five selected factors affected the ability of nine and ten year old children and adolescents aged thirteen and fourteen years to enjoy, comprehend, and interpret narrative films. The five factors were developmental level, sex, reading ability, adult intervention, and variation in film content and form. It was assumed that knowledge of the influence these factors exert on response to narrative films would aid teachers, librarians, and media specialists in selecting storytelling films for purchase and presentation.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Response to film will differ according to developmental level.
2. Response to film will differ according to sex.
3. Response to film will differ according to reading ability.
4. Response to film will differ according to adult intervention.
5. Response to film will differ according to variation in film content and form.

Related Literature

Studies by Squire (1964) and Purves (1968) provided the basis for the schema used in this study. A theoretical study by Favat (1977) and an experimental study by Purves (1975) indicated that Piaget's theory could be used to predict responses according to developmental level. Rawan (1975), in an examination of Piaget's theory in cross cultural perspective, found that while seven and nine year old American children gave responses comparable to those given by children in Piaget's sample, eleven and thirteen year old American children gave less mature responses than Piaget's sample. Recent research by Cox (1976) found the film preferences of fourth and fifth grade students differed according to film content and form.

Experimental Method

Design of the Study

This study was conducted according to a four-factor repeated measure design (developmental level x sex x adult intervention x film). Each of the first three independent variables was represented by two groups. Four films were used. A test instrument was designed which was similar in content and format for each of the four films used in the study.

Intact classes were used because randomization would have upset class schedules. As a result of using intact

classes, reading ability varied considerably among groups. Analysis of covariance was used to equate the groups with respect to reading ability and to compensate for group differences.

Factors in Response

Factor 1 - Developmental level. This study was designed to investigate whether Piaget's theory of intellectual development as an invariant sequential process (Flavell, 1963) can be used to predict the kind of response to narrative film that might be expected from older children and early adolescents. Subjects were children aged nine and ten, in the later stages of Piaget's concrete operations period, and thirteen and fourteen, in the early stages of his formal operations period. Piaget's theory seems to indicate that the children's comprehension of narrative film may be limited to the explicit and associative while the early adolescents may be able to interpret the unfamiliar and to infer from the implicit. The children might be expected to understand the sequence of events in a narrative film; the early adolescents might be expected to interpret theme and meaning from the events of the story (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958).

Factor 2 - Sex. Because American society has defined sex roles quite specifically, difference in sex may affect response to filmed narrative.

Factor 3 - Reading ability. Reading ability was correlated with response to film to determine if there was a relationship between the skills and competencies measured in

standardized reading achievement tests and those involved in response to filmed narrative.

Factor 4 - Adult intervention. The purpose of adult intervention was to determine if providing the students with some background information on folk literature would affect response to these four filmed versions of explanatory folk tales. The intervention was done solely by the investigator who emphasized several basic ideas. (1). The primary purpose of this type of tale in a primitive society was for entertainment (Radin, 1915). (2). A secondary purpose of these tales was to instruct children and young people growing up in the society on how they should behave. (3). Folk tales can reinforce our knowledge about the values and beliefs of the society in which they were originally told.

Factor 5 - Variations in film content and form. The films used in this study were representative of one type of folk genre, the explanatory tale. The intent was to keep genre constant in order to isolate more precisely film content and form as variables affecting response.

The explanatory tale has been most clearly described by Greenway (1964), Thompson (1946), and Waterman (1914). Thompson used the term to include those stories that explain "the origins and characteristics of various animals and plants, the stars, and mankind and his institutions." Waterman, who analyzed a sampling of North American Indian explanatory tales, stressed that for a tale to be classified as an explanatory tale the plot as a whole should be concerned with the explanatory motif, but he found enormous variation in unity between

plot and explanation. Greenway was concerned about the tendency of many folklorists working in the formative era of ethnology to classify complex myths simply as explanatory tales.

Even the small sampling of explanatory tales used in this study supports Waterman's findings of variation in unity between plot and explanation. This variation is indicated in the following descriptions of the films. Its possible influence on response will be discussed later.

Legend of the Niu, Cine-Pic, 11 min., color, 1965. Live action.

The adolescent protagonist in this Hawaiian legend must pass a difficult rite of passage, but he gives a strange young boy, who appears to be ill, all proof of having successfully passed his test of manhood. The stranger rewards him with the niu, or coconut, which becomes a source of food, clothing, and shelter for his people. The explanation is not integrated into the plot.

Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky, ACI Films, 11 min., color, 1971. Animated.

Stylized cardboard puppets were used to portray the anthropormorphized Sun, Moon, and Water in this West African tale. The conservative theme suggests it is not wise to try to change the established order. The motif of the deluge is emphasized in this version of a tale collected by Dayrell (1963). The viewer must understand the severity of exile as

a punishment in primitive societies for the explanation to have meaning in this poorly integrated tale.

How Beaver Stole Fire, ACI Film, 12 min., color, 1972. Animated.

The theft of fire motif is the central problem in this well-structured, integrated explanatory tale of the American Indians of the Northwest.

The Loon's Necklace, National Film Board of Canada, 11 min., color, 1949. Live action.

Actors wear wooden masks originally carved by the Indians of the Canadian Pacific Coast to portray the stereotyped characters in this classic tale of rebirth and renewal. The explanatory motif is integrated into the plot quite successfully, but it is not the central problem of the story.

Categories of Response

A response was defined as "the smallest combination of words which convey the sense of a single thought" (Squire, 1964). Responses were classified into three categories: appeal, literal comprehension, and interpretation.

Appeal as used in this study was defined as the student's response to the film as an enjoyable and entertaining experience. It includes some elements of the first two categories of the classification scheme for the affective domain by Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964), Receiving (Attending) and Responding, Squire's (1964) Literary Judgments, Purves's (1968) Engagement-Involvement, and Levinson's (1965) Identification with Character. Appeal was subdivided into the follow-

ing aspects: general appeal, appeal of the story, realism, cinematics, identification, difficulty, and pace.

Literal comprehension was defined as the ability to understand the initial story situation and the sequence of events as the plot unfolded and the story problem was resolved. Literal comprehension was not further subdivided into aspects.

Interpretation was defined as ability to comprehend the meaning of the story as translated to film. This included the ability to understand the elements of story, to identify and comprehend the major ideas presented in the film with their inter-relationships, and to generalize concerning the overall theme (Bloom, 1956). Interpretation was subdivided into aspects of theme, plot, character, and setting.

Subjects

Two hundred subjects (N = 200) attending four private schools and one laboratory school in Honolulu, Hawaii, were assigned to four experimental groups of fifty subjects each:

Group I - Subjects in the later stage of Piaget's concrete operations period (ages nine and ten) who viewed the films without adult intervention.

Group II - Subjects in the later stage of Piaget's concrete operations period (ages nine and ten) who viewed the films with adult intervention.

Group III - Subjects in the early stages of Piaget's formal operations period (ages thirteen and fourteen) who viewed the films without adult intervention.

Group IV - Subjects in the early stages of Piaget's

formal operations period (ages thirteen and fourteen) who viewed the film with adult intervention.

All students present during the class periods the study was being conducted participated and worked on the instrument, but test instruments from the following students were not used: students reading below the 3.5 grade level; students who, in the judgment of the classroom teacher, were deficient in English language skills; students for whom the school had no record of reading achievement as measured by a standardized reading test within one calendar year of the study.

The socioeconomic status of the parents of the subjects who made up this sample would be comparable to several segments of the elementary and junior high school population of an urban area on the American Mainland: students attending private church-affiliated schools; students attending public schools in middle income urban or suburban neighborhoods; to a lesser degree students attending public schools in a lower income neighborhood. The cultural background of these subjects included more students of Asian, Pacific Islands, and mixed ancestry than one would expect to find on the Mainland and fewer Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians.

Mental ability test scores were not available for these students, but percentile reading scores for the standardized achievement tests administered within the calendar year were made available. The mean percentile reading score for the

200 students was 65.12, well above the national average.

The Test Instrument

The test instrument included both structured and unstructured sections. The structured section was divided into three parts of ten questions each to measure the three categories of response. Part I, which measured appeal, was a rating scale. Part II, which tested for literal comprehension of the filmed narratives, and Part III, which tested for interpretation, were made up of multiple choice questions. Questions for Parts I and III were designed to isolate the aspects of appeal and interpretation identified in the above discussion of categories of response. The unstructured section of the test instrument consisted of two open-ended questions, one intended to encourage free response to appeal and the other designed to elicit an independent response to theme.

Three independent judges assessed the four test instruments for validity, reading level, and consistency in level of difficulty. The instruments were then tested in a pilot study.

Statistical Analysis of the Data

Several statistical methods were used to analyze the data. Analysis of covariance, the Newman-Kuels test, and the *t* test were conducted to test for differences in mean ratings and scores. Three independent judges analyzed the open-ended questions to discover whether subjects had given original responses in their answers. The Chi-square was used to learn if significant differences existed in the number of original

responses according to developmental level and adult intervention. The level of significance necessary to reject the null hypothesis was $p > .05$.

Findings

Response According to Developmental Level

Developmental level influenced response with the younger students rating the films significantly higher in appeal but with the older students scoring significantly higher on literal comprehension and interpretation of setting and plot. No significant differences were found according to developmental level for interpretation of theme or character.

Response According to Sex

Sex in interaction with developmental level was a moderating factor in appeal. The older girls were generally less critical than the older boys and gave these films higher ratings for appeal. No significant differences in response according to sex were found for literal comprehension or for aspects of interpretation.

Correlation of Reading Ability with Response

Table 1 (page 32) shows the correlation of reading ability with aspects of response for each film. No significant correlation between reading ability and any one aspect of response was found across all four films. The aspects of response for which correlation was most frequently significant were literal comprehension and interpretation of setting. Reading ability correlated significantly but to a lesser degree

with interpretation of theme, character, and plot. The only significant correlation for any aspect of appeal was a negative correlation for general appeal.

Response According to Adult Intervention

Difference in response according to adult intervention was minimal. The only significant differences that could be attributed to this factor were the interactions with developmental level for response to story and interpretation of plot. Older subjects gave a higher rating for story with adult intervention while younger subjects rated story higher without adult intervention. Younger students scored higher on interpretation of plot with adult intervention; older students scored higher without it.

Response According to Variations in Film Content and Form

Analysis of covariance showed variation in film to be the most powerful single factor affecting response. Table 2 (page 35) shows the ratings and scores of the four films by the 200 subjects for each aspect of response. Overall, the students rated Legend of the Niu highest in appeal and scored highest on it for interpretation of setting and plot. But they scored significantly lower on this film for literal comprehension than for any of the other three films, 66% compared with 89% for The Loon's Necklace, 92% for Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky, and 96% for How Beaver Stole Fire.

The students rated Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky lowest in appeal, scored high on it for literal compre-

hension and low for interpretation of theme, character, and plot. They scored highest on How Beaver Stole Fire for literal comprehension and interpretation of theme and character. Despite the complexity of The Loon's Necklace, the students scored high on it for literal comprehension and were quite successful in interpreting setting, character, and plot.

Analysis of the Open-ended Questions

Three independent judges read the answers to the open-ended questions and classified each original response into one of the twelve aspects of response. Responses which simply repeated what had been stated on the structured instrument were not coded; neither were literal plot summaries. In most instances the agreement among the judges was one hundred percent. The judges coded three hundred and thirty separate, original responses. One hundred and fifty of the two hundred subjects gave at least one response the judges coded as original.

Chi-square tests showed no significant differences in the number of responses for any aspect of response the judges coded as original between the younger students and the older students or between students who had received adult intervention and those who had not. Responses to the open-ended questions supported what had already been learned from the analysis of the objective instrument and added new data which were qualitative in nature.

Most responses to the open-ended question dealing with appeal referred to cinematics, and many of these were positive

responses about color. Others included favorable comments on the acting of the Hawaiian boys in Legend of the Niu and to the artistry and creativity of Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky.

Comments on story were second in frequency. These usually referred to genre and were mostly positive: "Legends can sometimes make me believe the unbelievable, and I like that." The students also expressed satisfaction with the endings of the stories. The explanatory motif that a folklorist might consider tacked on to the basic tale seemed "refreshing" and a "pleasant surprise" to some of the older students.

Most free responses coded as identification indicated a strong identification with the Hawaiian characters and values of Legend of the Niu. A few students identified with the North American Indians and with the life style and personal qualities of the characters in The Loon's Necklace and How Beaver Stole Fire. Lack of female characters and negative sex stereotyping posed problems for some of the older girls: "I'd like these stories a lot better if they had girls in them." "I'm tired of seeing women always having big mouths."

All original responses coded as difficulty and realism were negative. The respondents perceived the films as too easy and as unrealistic.

Interpretation of theme evoked a number of free responses from both the nine and ten year olds and the thirteen and fourteen year olds that showed insight and perception. One student

summarized the meaning of Legend of the Niu succinctly and poignantly:

> I think it's saying that gaining respect from other people, well even that isn't as important as helping out another person in need. I think the boys realized that even if they didn't give the boy their supplies they couldn't have been real men by turning their backs on him to pass the test.

An early adolescent wrote of The Loon's Necklace: "I think this film is about your life and how to see things when you want to see." Another sensitive interpretation of the theme of this film was:

> I think the film told how this man truly believed that the loon was a sign of life and that if you don't do what you're put on this earth to do you aren't alive and when you are hopeful you have a reason to live.

A younger student wrote of Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky: "I think it's about being banished from your home and tribe."

Conclusions

Conclusions from the findings of this study can be drawn about each of the five factors investigated. Variation in film was the single most powerful factor, emphasizing the impact of narrative film as an art form. The findings indicate Piaget's theory may be a useful guide for selection and presentation of narrative film. Sex was a moderating factor in appeal. Reading ability correlated with literal comprehension

and interpretation, but this was not consistent across all four films. The effects of the type of adult intervention used in this study were negligible but raised some interesting questions for further study.

Response According to Variation in Film Content and Form

Variation in film affected all three categories of response and all aspects of appeal and interpretation. The data concerning Legend of the Niu provide more information about these students' response to filmed narrative than the data on any other one film used in the study. Useful data were gathered from both the objective instrument and the responses to the open-ended questions. First, this live action film set in Hawaii was the overwhelming favorite. The film dramatization of the protagonist's conflict between his desire to pass his rigorous test of manhood and his concern for the well-being of the strange boy is a story problem that seemed particularly relevant to these students living in the Honolulu area. They identified with the adolescent characters portrayed by boys of Hawaiian ancestry and with social values they considered expressive of ancient Hawaiian society and culture. Actually, the story problem deals with the universal theme of brotherly love and the brotherhood of man. Only the setting is unique to Hawaii. Perhaps it is the artistic integration of a universal theme with a familiar cultural setting that accounts for the impact of this film.

The students' low scores in literal comprehension for Legend of the Niu seem inconsistent with its high rating for

appeal. An assumption of this investigator, and perhaps of other teachers and librarians, was that a high correlation might be expected between appeal and literal comprehension. Because the lack of correlation was unexpected, both the test instrument and the film were re-examined in an attempt to find an explanation for the inconsistency. The test instrument appeared to be valid and consistent in difficulty with the test instruments for the other three films, but a re-examination of the film indicated that a basic principle in film art had been violated in its production.

Erwin Panofsky (1959), the distinguished art historian, defined the sound motion picture as an art form that resolved the aesthetic conflict between the visual and the oral by a fusion of sight and sound with neither dominating but with each carrying that part of the communication it can express most effectively. In Legend of the Niu the offscreen narrator tells the initial story situation, but this is not presented visually. Several events of the story might also have been visualized more dramatically to co-express the communication given orally. This film violates, to a degree, Panofsky's principle of coexpressibility. This may have been the reason the students had difficulty in comprehending the initial story situation and the sequence of events dramatized in the film.

Although these students rated Legend of the Niu, a live action film, highest in appeal of the four films studied, it cannot be said that they expressed a consistent, significant

preference for live action film over animation. The film they rated second in general appeal, although significantly lower than Legend of the Niu according to the Newman-Kuels test, was How Beaver Stole Fire, an animated film. There was no significant difference between their rating of How Beaver Stole Fire and the third-ranked film, The Loon's Necklace, a live action film in which the actors wear stylized masks. They rated Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky, an animated film, significantly lower than The Loon's Necklace. These ratings suggest that film form alone is not a decisive factor in appeal.

Nor is film form, by itself, a significant factor in either literal comprehension or interpretation. The students scored higher in literal comprehension on the two animated films, but this would appear to be a response to story content and film production rather than to form. Both How Beaver Stole Fire and Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky are simple tales while The Loon's Necklace has a complex plot structure. The possible relationship between the failure of the producer to integrate sight and sound in Legend of the Niu and the students' low scores was discussed above. There was no correlation between film form and the students' scores for aspects of interpretation.

The findings concerning story content as a separate entity from film form are more conclusive. The simple tales, as noted above, were easier for these students to comprehend. Moreover, the students scored significantly higher ($p > .01$) on the well-integrated simple tale, How Beaver Stole Fire, than on the

simple tale in which the explanation was not integral to the plot, Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky.

The consistency of the data concerning Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky allows one to draw certain conclusions concerning response to the content of this film. The students rated it significantly lower than any other film ($p>.01$) on all aspects of appeal, and they scored lower on it for two aspects of interpretation, plot and character, than for any of the other three films ($p>.01$). In the open-ended questions and class discussions, they used the terms "unfamiliar" and "unrealistic" to describe the film. They did not identify strongly with the protagonist, and this was the only film given a nagative rating for story, although at 2.84, with 3.00 as a neutral rating, this was not a strongly negative rating. The conservative message of this story, even though coupled in the film with the near-universal motif of the deluge, did not seem to have meaning for these students raised in a modern, technological society that rewards progress and innovation.

The two North American Indian tales shared the middle ratings for six aspects of appeal and for interpretation of plot. These films lacked the immediacy of Legend of the Niu for these Honolulu area students, but the stories had significantly greater meaning and appeal than the more exotic Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky.

The findings of this study indicate that variation in film content affects response to filmed narrative. Influential factors in film content seem to be a universal theme, a story

problem meaningful to the respondent, a protagonist with whom he or she can identify, a familiar setting, and complexity of plot structure.

It should not be assumed from the data, however, that content alone should be given overriding consideration in selecting films for purchase and presentation. The previewer needs to look for the artistic integration of content and form and the appropriateness of the form to express the content of the narrative. Although no significant difference between live action and animated films could be isolated as a factor in response in this study, appropriateness and artistry in film form remain important considerations in film selection. The lack of any identifiable difference in response to form may have been due to the appropriateness of the form used to dramatize each of these tales.

Response According to Developmental Level and Sex

One objective of this study was to determine if Piaget's theory of sequential, invariant intellectual development could be used to predict response to narrative film. The findings indicate that Piaget's theory may be a useful predictor of response if allowance is made for American students in these two developmental levels being somewhat older than Piaget's sample.

The thirteen and fourteen year old students scored significantly higher ($p > .01$) for literal comprehension than the nine and ten year olds, whose average age was nine years, eleven months. The early adolescents, whose average age was

fourteen years, zero months scored 89% in literal comprehension while the mean score for the younger students was 82%. Interaction between developmental level and film was highly significant for literal comprehension, however ($p>.001$). The early adolescents scored 73% for Legend of the Niu, the film that in part violated Panofsky's principle of coexpressibility, while the nine and ten year olds scored only 60%, a difference of 13%. The older students scored 96% on Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky while the younger students scored 89%, a difference of 7% on this simple tale that does not have the explanatory motif integrated into the plot. The older students also scored 7% higher on the complex tale, The Loon's Necklace, 93% compared to 86%. But for How Beaver Stole Fire, the well integrated simple tale, the younger students attained a 1% higher score than the older students, 97% compared to 96%.

In other words, the children in the later stages of the concrete operations period had mastered the literal comprehension of a filmed narrative that had a logical plot structure and an obvious, explicit cause and effect relationship, but their comprehension decreased as the film presentation became less explicit. This level of achievement seems to be somewhat lower than might have been expected of nine and ten year olds according to Piaget's theory.

The high mean percentile reading achievement score (63.16) for the nine and ten year olds must also be taken into consideration. A comparison of their average score for literal comprehension with their high reading achievement score suggests that

if Piaget's theory is used to predict response, teachers and librarians may expect American children to be somewhat older than Piaget's sample when they reach equilibrium in the concrete operations period.

The early adolescents, although they had mastered the literal comprehension of the films, were not able to interpret the films with the degree of competence expected in the formal operations period. They scored significantly higher than the children on interpretation of plot and setting, but not on interpretation of theme or character. It is clear from the analysis of the data that the early adolescents did not demonstrate a consistent superiority over the nine and ten year olds in hypothetico-deductive strategies. These eighth and ninth grade students as a group were not able to consistently subordinate the literal content of the films to the interrelationships among plot, characterization, and setting. They were not able, therefore, to cope with the level of abstraction necessary to understand the underlying meaning or theme. The findings indicate that as a group these early adolsecents were in a transitional stage rather than having attained equilibrium in the formal operations period. Since Piaget gives the age at which equilibrium in the formal operations period is attained as fourteen or fifteen years, these students would not be expected to have reached equilibrium. But with an average age of fourteen years, zero months and a mean percentile reading achievement score of 67.44, it might have been have been predicted, based on Piaget's theory, that

these early adolescents would have been more successful in interpreting theme and character. Their success in interpreting plot and setting suggests that they have entered the formal operations period, however, and that with some allowance for a difference in age between American adolescents and Piaget's sample, Piaget's theory may be useful in predicting response (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958).

The findings concerning appeal according to developmental level confirm what teachers and librarians already know. These four films, which required of the viewer varying degrees of "willing suspension of disbelief," had a high degree of general appeal for the younger age group, above 4.00 on a scale of one to five. The older boys, predictably, rated the films much lower, 2.87. The older girls, however, gave the films an overall rating of 3.25. The older girls were also less critical than the older boys on other aspects of appeal. These films, then, would be appropriate for an audience that included adolescent girls, but ages seven to ten may be the optimum years for the enjoyment of this type of film by an audience of boys or a mixed group.

Response According to Reading Ability

The lack of positive, significant correlation between aspects of appeal and reading ability is consistent with Norvell's (1958) findings concerning reading preferences. Developmental level is a powerful factor in appeal; reading ability is not. Poor readers found these films as appealing as their classmates who read well. In fact, the less competent

readers enjoyed Legend of the Niu significantly more ($p > .05$) than the students who had achieved higher scores on standardized reading achievement tests.

Reading ability, of course, correlates highly with mental ability. The correlation between reading ability and response to these films is consistent with what is already known concerning correlation between reading ability and mental ability. Reading ability correlated with literal comprehension for all films except How Beaver Stole Fire, the simple, well integrated tale. Correlation between reading ability and aspects of interpretation was not consistent across all four films, but correlation was strongest for The Loon's Necklace, the most complex of the films used in this study. (See Table 2, page 35.)

The reading ability of his/her students, therefore, is a factor the teacher must consider in selecting films for classroom use if his/her objectives involve literal comprehension and/or interpretation. But if the primary objective of presenting a film is to provide an enjoyable aesthetic experience as, for example, in a public library film program, developmental level is a more pertinent factor for consideration.

Response According to Adult Intervention

Adult intervention was not, by itself, a significant factor for any aspect of response, but the interaction between adult intervention and developmental level was significant in response to appeal of story and to interpretation of plot. Adult intervention enhanced the older students' enjoyment of

the film narratives while the younger students enjoyed the stories more without adult intervention. The interaction was reversed for interpretation of plot. Younger students scored higher with adult intervention; older students scored higher without it.

This latter finding is interesting in that according to Piaget's theory adult intervention of the kind used in this study would not be expected to influence interpretation of plot by children in the concrete operations period. Early adolescents in the formal operations period, on the other hand, might have been expected to score higher on this aspect of response with adult intervention. But it must be emphasized that only the interaction was significant. The younger students' scores were higher but not significantly so with adult intervention than without it.

These interactions are too slight to be conclusive. Further research studies designed to investigate interaction between intervention and developmental level might determine what types of intervention are effective at different developmental levels.

The minimal effect of adult intervention suggests that the type of lesson plan used by the investigator has little value either in enhancing appeal or improving comprehension. Librarians normally try to avoid giving lengthy introductions when telling stories to children. The same practice would seem to be desirable in presenting narrative films. But the

classroom situation is quite different, and the effectiveness of intervention may also be quite different when integrated into the classroom teacher's overall objectives.

Suggestions for Further Research

Improved research methods are needed for study of response to film. These include valid and reliable test instruments, methods for obtaining free, unstructured responses, and schemata to analyze data accurately and precisely.

With more precise research tools specific problems in response to narrative films could be studied more effectively. For example, what would be the responses of late adolescents, adults, and younger children to the films used in this study? Would late adolescents be able to interpret the films more consistently than early adolescents? Would younger children find the animated films more appealing? Would response to these films differ if this study were conducted somewhere other than Hawaii? What types of intervention are effective with students at each developmental level?

Response to literary theme, film form, characteristics of the protagonist, the story problem, and the quality of film as a work of art are problems deserving further study.

Summary

This study was designed to learn how five selected factors affected the ability of children aged nine and ten and early

adolescents aged thirteen and fourteen to enjoy, comprehend, and interpret narrative films. The five factors were developmental level, sex, reading ability, adult intervention, and variation in film content and form. It was hypothesized that response would differ according to each of these factors. The rationale for the study was that information concerning factors influencing response would enable teachers, librarians, and media specialists to be more effective in selecting narrative films for purchase and for presentation to children and adolescents in these age groups. Two hundred students divided into four experimental groups participated in the study.

Jean Piaget's theory of invariant, sequential intellectual development provided the theoretical basis for the hypothesis concerning developmental level. According to Piaget's theory, the nine and ten year olds were in the later stages of the concrete operations period of intellectual development and their comprehension of narrative films would be limited to the explicit and associative. The early adolescents would be in the early stages of his formal operations period and might begin to demonstrate ability to interpret implied meanings from the events dramatized in the films. The findings indicated that, if allowances were made for American students being somewhat older than Piaget's sample, his theory could be used to predict response to narrative films by children in the later stages of his concrete operations period and early adolescents in the beginning stages of his formal operations period.

Sex was a moderating factor in appeal with the early adolescent girls giving the films significantly higher ratings on most aspects of appeal than the ratings given by the early adolescent boys. Sex was not a significant factor for response to literal comprehension or interpretation.

Response did not correlate positively with reading ability for aspects of appeal, a finding that is consistent with results of reading preference studies. Correlation between reading ability and response to literal comprehension and interpretation was stronger for the more difficult films. This correlation reflects the strong correlation between reading ability and mental ability and indicates that some of the skills and abilities required to comprehend a printed text are also required to understand a narrative film.

Adult intervention as a single factor was not significant for any aspect of response, but the interaction between adult intervention and developmental level was significant for response to appeal of story and to interpretation of plot. This minimal effect of adult intervention suggests that further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of different types of intervention, the interaction between different types of intervention and developmental level, and the effectiveness of different types of interveners, the classroom teacher compared with the peer group, for example. The results show very clearly that background information on folk literature presented by an outside investigator neither enhances enjoyment of these films nor increases comprehension.

Variation in film is a highly significant factor affecting all aspects of response. Film content rather than a difference between live action and animated film form appears to account for the difference in response. A theme with universal implications, a story problem that has immediacy and meaning for the respondents, a protagonist whith whom the respondent can identify, a familiar setting, and complexity and consistency of plot structure seem to be factors in film content that influence response. No difference in response could be identified as due solely to the difference between live action and animated film. These findings do not imply that film form does not influence response but only that film form could not be identified as a separate entity in this study. As with any work of art, it is undoubtedly the artistic integration of content and form that gives the narrative film meaning, validity, and vitality.

A serendipitous finding was the relationship between Panofsky's principle of coexpressibility and the ability of of these students to understand the initial story situation and the sequence of events in a narrative film. One film, Legend of the Niu, depended too heavily on the offscreen narrator to communicate the initial story situation and several events in the story. As a result of the inadequate fusion of sight and sound, the students scored low on literal comprehension for this film.

Finally, both the objective data and the responses to the open-ended questions show that these films were a valuable

aesthetic and educational experience for the respondents, one well worth the expenditure of time and funds required to make narrative films accessible to children and adolescents.

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Table 1

Correlation of Reading Ability and Aspects of Response with Film

Aspect of Response	Film	R
General	Legend of the Niu	-.263*
	Why the Sun...	-.117
	How Beaver Stole Fire	-.026
	The Loon's Necklace	-.026
Story	Legend of the Niu	-.222
	Why the Sun...	-.003
	How Beaver Stole Fire	-.035
	The Loon's Necklace	.058
Realism	Legend of the Niu	-.185
	Why the Sun...	-.117
	How Beaver Stole Fire	-.122
	The Loon's Necklace	-.099
Cinematics	Legend of the Niu	-.222
	Why the Sun...	-.103
	How Beaver Stole Fire	-.079
	The Loon's Necklace	-.079
Identification	Legend of the Niu	-.004
	Why the Sun...	-.057
	How Beaver Stole Fire	-.136
	The Loon's Necklace	.003

Difficulty	Legend of the Niu	-.166
	Why the Sun...	.024
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.014
	The Loon's Necklace	-.005
Pace	Legend of the Niu	-.172
	Why the Sun...	-.151
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.011
	The Loon's Necklace	-.058
Literal Comprehension	Legend of the Niu	.539*
	Why the Sun...	.303*
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.219
	The Loon's Necklace	.474*
Theme	Legend of the Niu	.039
	Why the Sun...	.330*
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.175
	The Loon's Necklace	-.005
Setting	Legend of the Niu	.263*
	Why the Sun...	.189
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.262*
	The Loon's Necklace	.349*
Characterization	Legend of the Niu	.018
	Why the Sun...	.026
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.001

Plot	The Loon's Necklace	.279*
	Legend of the Niu	.200
	Why the Sun...	-.089
	How Beaver Stole Fire	.233
	The Loon's Necklace	.262*

*p >.05

Table 2

Overall Ratings and Scores of the Four Films by 200 Subjects

Aspects of Response	Legend of the Niu		Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky		How Beaver Stole Fire		The Loon's Necklace		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
General	3.99	.99	3.08	1.21	3.61	1.07	3.58	1.09	39.62***
Story	4.01	.75	2.84	1.24	3.45	1.08	3.43	1.03	56.86***
Realism	3.45	1.15	2.23	1.06	2.24	1.17	2.81	1.14	92.49***
Cinematics	3.65	.95	3.14	1.07	3.45	.98	3.48	.83	17.20***
Identification	.32	.44	.18	.35	.32	.43	.19	.37	8.79***
Difficulty	2.64	.71	2.33	.94	2.62	.63	2.97	.69	33.44***
Pace	4.26	.95	3.31	1.45	4.09	1.03	3.91	1.05	41.07***
Literal Comprehension	.66	.16	.92	.12	.96	.06	.89	.16	358.68***
Theme	.57	.50	.40	.32	.76	.43	.24	.43	59.57***
Plot	.83	.26	.13	.18	.51	.35	.46	.23	265.74***
Characterization	.50	.29	.40	.32	.87	.34	.52	.36	76.50***
Setting	.52	.24	.49	.40	.41	.23	.46	.25	7.26***

***p > .001